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NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

MAGNUM JOVIS INCREMENTUM, *Ciris* 398, AND VERG. *Ec.* iv. 49

Very much has been written¹ about the meaning of the word *incrementum*, and my only excuse for returning to the problem derives from chancing upon the rare word in an inscription which seems not to have been cited in previous discussions.

Now the word *incrementum* has various meanings. It may denote the process of growth (*incrementa vitium*, Cic. *De Sen.* 52) a meaning not applicable to our passage. It may refer to a concrete thing which is viewed as increasing the size or value of something else (*incremento renovatur*, Curt., V, 1, 40); accordingly Cartault interprets the Vergilian line: "Jupiter sera grandi par la naissance d'un tel enfant." It may be the seed or germ which produces growth into full fruition (the result being expressed by an objective genitive, *populi incrementa futuri*, Ov. *Met.* iii. 103) and this is adopted by most commentators as the meaning² in Vergil. However these interpretations are obviously not consonant with the general tone of the poem, since they lay stress upon the future apotheosis of the child. The child seems to be present, not as the creator of the golden age, but as marking the age and progress of the new era. A fourth interpretation, *incrementum* = "child," or "offspring," an old but rarely adopted solution of the passage, is supported by the inscription in question as well as by two or three other occurrences of the word. The inscription (*CIL*, VI, 13213) reads:

D. M.

M. Aur. Sabinus, cui fuit et signum Vagulus,
inter incrementa coequalium sui temporis
vita incomparabilis, dulcissimus filius.

The subject of the inscription is a child as his *signum* shows, hence the *incrementa* are also "children." The inscription is apparently not early, to judge from the language and the name Aurelius. We might therefore hesitate to use it for comment upon Vergil, were it not that Servius (*Ad Ec.* iv. 49) had remarked that Vergil was using a colloquial word which was permissible in bucolic poetry.

Now Marini in *Atti dei Fratelli Arvali*, p. 425 (quoted by Mayor in *Virgil's Mess. Eclogue*, p. 140) has cited another inscription (= *CIL*, VI,

¹ See Forbiger and Conington on *Ec.* iv. 49; also Munro in *Jour. of Class. and Sacred Phil.*, IV, 290; Skutsch, *Gallus und Vergil*, p. 81, and *Aus Vergil's Frühzeit*, pp. 148 ff.; Mayor and Fowler in *Vergil's Messianic Eclogue*, pp. 61 ff., 112, 139.

² Munro: "the germ of a future Juppiter"; Mayor: "the promise of a Jove to be"; Skutsch: "ein künftiger Gott."

8984) and Apuleius, *Metam.* v. 28, two examples of the word in which the meaning is clearly "child." The inscription reads in part:

Niceratus Augustorum ñ ser.
fecit sibi et
duobus incrementis, Victori et
Chrysomallo.

In this epitaph, which probably belongs to the second century, the two "incrementa" are apparently the children of an imperial *paedagogus*. In Apuleius *Met.* v. 28, there is some doubt about the tone of the word, Munro giving it what he assumes to be the etymological meaning (from *increasco*) takes it as a term of contempt; "that little abortion." This, however, seems to miss the point of the comedy. When Venus finds herself a mother-in-law, a fact that must betray her years, her first impulse is to insist that Cupid is still beardless (*investem, hoc aetatis puer*), in fact a mere child, *illud incrementum!* Finally an inscription cited by Mayor but, I fear, mistranslated by him (*op. cit.*, p. 139), seems to me to support this meaning. In *CIL*, X, 5853 we find *daretur pueris, curiae incrementis, crustulum*. Mayor supposes this to mean: "boys who would hereafter constitute the Town Council," a difficult interpretation since the *curia* was constituted of those who had been elected to the duumviral offices. The phrase must apparently mean: "boys, who are the *offspring* of decuriones."

We have then four passages in which the word means "child" or "offspring," and this is the most natural interpretation of the word in Vergil, if we remember that Vergil does not hesitate to call Augustus the terrestrial Jove. And this view of the line is strongly supported by Martial's imitation (vi. 3. 2) which translates the word by *puer*. Note the very close imitation:

Adgredere

Cara deum suboles, magnum Jovis *incrementum* [Vergil],

Nascere

Vera deum suboles, nascere magne *puer* [Martial].

Finally this meaning has a peculiar fitness for the line in the *Ciris*, which is usually assumed to be the original of the passage in the Eclogue. The word apparently has the root $\sqrt{\text{ker}}$, found in $\kappa\acute{o}\rho\omicron\varsigma$ and $\Delta\iota\omicron\varsigma \kappa\omicron\upsilon\pi\omicron\iota$. It is noteworthy that in *Ciris* 398, the

cara Jovis suboles, magnum Jovis incrementum

are in fact the $\Delta\iota\omicron\varsigma \kappa\omicron\upsilon\pi\omicron\iota$, so that the Latin phrase is not only a translation of the Greek, but an exact etymological equivalent. Here surely the only reasonable translation of the word is "offspring."

What has enticed the commentators to an incongruous interpretation of our passage is probably a feeling frequently expressed in our handbooks, that nouns in *-mentum* are apt to have an active meaning. However a recent study of such nouns (Cressman, *The Semantics of -mentum, -bulum,*

and -culum) has called attention to the fact that a no small number of such nouns denote the result of the action, as well as the instrument, or the action, as is the case with *fragmentum*, *caementum*, *ramentum*, *detrimentum*; and the *Thesaurus* has two instances of *crementum* = "offspring."

There is a passage in the *Digest* (33, 8, 8, cited from Ulpian) which may give a clue to the way the concrete meaning "offspring" arose: "*incrementa* ex rebus peculiaribus . . . ut puta *partus* ancillarum, vel *fetus* pecorum," i.e., the *incrementa* are the offspring of slave women and cattle. From this usage, which obviously belonged to the early agricultural days of Rome, it is not difficult to imagine how in peasant-language the word acquired a specialized meaning of human offspring in general—and Servius testifies to the fact that Vergil's usage was suited to bucolic diction.

It seems then that we need not strain the root meaning of *incrementum* into far-fetched interpretations of the two passages cited. The poet of the *Ciris*—very possibly the youthful Vergil—was enough of an Alexandrian to use a word better known in the cottage than in the palace, and probably *doctus* enough to recognize the equivalence of *Διὸς κοῦροι* and Jovis incrementum in the sense of offspring of Jove. In the Eclogue, Vergil repeated the line as he so often did, and in the same simple sense, but applying it to a child of the *praesens divus*. The fact that the second half of the line is then almost a repetition of the sense of the first half need hardly disturb anyone who knows Vergil's fondness for parallelism in sentiment.

This note does not add decisive evidence upon any of the important questions relating to the fourth Eclogue, but if *incrementum* means offspring I am inclined to think that the child referred to was the expected child of Augustus, and furthermore that the line in the Eclogue was written subsequent to the *Ciris*.

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UDAS ANTE FORES: *Persius* v. 165-66

In the fifth satire of Persius, 166-74, the exclusion scene in the Eunuchus of Terence, Act I, scene 1, is used following the precedent of Horace *Sat.* ii. 3. 259-71 as a stock example of the slavery to love. The lines 162-66 read as follows:

crudum Chaerestratus unguem
adrodens ait haec—an siccis dedecus obstem
cognatis? An rem patriam rumore sinistro
limen ad obscaenum frangam, dum Chrysidis udas
ebrius ante fores exstincta cum face canto?

Here the phrase *udas ante fores* is, as Gildersleeve characteristically remarks, "wet with the sweat of the commentators of Persius."

Before taking up the current interpretations of the phrase it is essential to notice that all recent editors regard these lines as an allusion to a *παράκλανσιθυρον*. At first sight this interpretation in view of *canto* seems the